



Administrative Report

Mayor Eddie Moran

TO: City Council
FROM: Frank Denbowski, Interim Managing Director
PREPARED BY: Maritza Loaiza, Special Assistant
MEETING DATE: March 14, 2022
AGENDA MEMO DATE: March 9, 2022

MAYOR:

- Mayor Moran will join the Reading Area Water Authority's efforts to advocate for intergovernmental funding for the Ontelanee Dam upgrade. RAWA is forming a coalition to seek federal, state, county, and local funding. RAWA Executive Director Bill Murray has already met with over 40 elected officials or staff members, and feedback has been supportive.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- The Community Development Department continues to meet with various developers on current and potential projects. Projects that appear to be close to completion are as follows:
 - Heights Development LLC recently acquired 100 South 4th Street and received a zoning variance for a reduced apartment size for 20 student apartments. Apartments are expected to be ready in the late part of summer 2022.
 - Fashion Apparel will relocate to their new distribution facility in Reading from Philadelphia beginning in March.
 - Berkshire Building owners will begin with interior demolition to repurpose the building for student housing. A total of 79 apartments for approximately 150 international students will be ready by early spring 2023.
 - Madison Building will have 86 market-rate apartments available in the early summer of 2022 contingent on receiving a certificate of occupancy in May 2022.

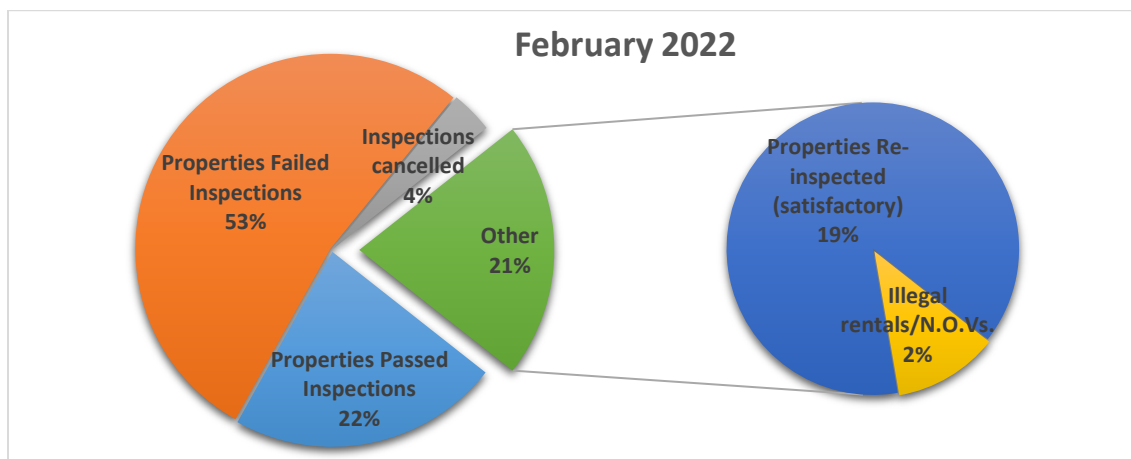
- Douglas Development will place GoPuff at the Reading Station Outlet, with an expected store opening in the summer of 2022. GoPuff will cater to those with a busy lifestyle throughout Berks County. Customers will order online and schedule delivery.
 - Albright College received final plan approval to build Exeter Hall, a student dorm building that will replace an existing student dorm. The new dormitory is expected to be complete in May 2023.
- The Community Development’s Property Maintenance Division provided the following Quality of Life Report for February 2022. Violations are broken down by City Council District:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
QOL 001: Accumulation of Garbage	7	7	1	0	3	13	31
QOL 002: Animal maintenance and waste	1	1	0	1	1	0	4
QOL 003: Improper disposal of Garbage	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
QOL 004 High weeds and grass	1	0	0	1	1	2	5
QOL 006 Motor vehicles	0	0	3	0	2	10	15
QOL 009 Outside placement of indoor furniture of appliances	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
QOL 013 Storage containers out of place	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
QOL14 Storing or discarding appliances	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total QOLs	10	8	6	4	8	25	71

- The Community Development’s Property Maintenance Division provided the following Inspection Summary for February 2022:

February 2022 Summary

Properties Passed Inspections	109
Properties Failed Inspections	256
Inspections cancelled	17
Illegal rentals/N.O.Vs.	12
Properties Re-inspected (satisfactory)	91



- The Community Development’s Zoning Division provided the following report on Planning and Zoning activities for February 2022:

February 2022 Report

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total
New permit applications rec'd City	26	4	8	8	46
Pending intake				11	11
Permit reviews completed	12	10	15	14	51
Application returned incomplete	4	3	3	1	11
Applications on hold/awaiting applicant	50	48	70	63	231
Applications pending/in review	24	27	16	25	92
Applications over 31 days	32	34	34	50	150
New Zoning Complaints/Enforcements			39	40	79
Open from 2021				274	274
New Inquiries/research new received	18	21	6	8	53
2022 Open inquiries				42	42
2021 Open inquiries				8	8
Site visits	11	15	8	27	61
Phone Calls	83	78	76	118	355
Walk-ins	63	55	51	155	324
Zoning Hearings (ZHB) March 9					0
Decision rendered				6	6
Scheduled hearing				8	8
Withdrawn				1	1
Total Actionable items					1803

FINANCE:

- The Finance Department’s Information Technology Division IT completed 395 support tickets during February.
- The IT Division continues working on standing up new GIS servers.
- The IT Division is currently engaged in the roll-out of Cisco Webex to users providing softphone capabilities.
- The IT Division performed stand-up service for the Police Substation at Alvernia’s CollegeTowne campus after Comcast completed the installation of the cable modem.
- The Finance Department’s Citizen Service Center is preparing for the conversion from Hansen to EnerGov. A spreadsheet has been created listing Hansen fees by department and new Munis general ledger codes. Additional projects relating to the systems conversion are also anticipated. Required information for cashiering hardware is currently under discussion with EnerGov representatives.
- The CSC’s Housing bills were to go out the week of February 28th, but due to a postage issue, they are now expected to go out the week of March 14th.

- As of February 18th, the Finance Department's Accounting Division reports that the Tyler Munis project responsibilities were transferred from the Tyler Munis Project Manager to the Tyler Munis support team, marking the formal completion of the implementation phase. Much of the USL legacy system is discontinued. Tyler Munis is now up and running, with all personnel trained and using the system for purchasing, general ledger, and project management functions.

Additional support from Tyler Munis was provided to core users, Public Works personnel, auditors, and end-users on February 28th.

The Human Capital Management - Payroll Module is scheduled to go live on January 1st, 2023. Meeting with Human Resource personnel began in mid-February to begin the implementation process.

- The Finance Department's Purchasing Division provided the following updates and deadline reminders:
 - **Traffic Signal Preventative Maintenance and Response Maintenance Program.** The award of this project will appear on City Council's March 14th agenda.
 - **Penn Square Properties RFQ.** A total of three proposals were received. The selection review committee is in the process of reviewing the proposals and will schedule interviews.
 - **Language Access Plan RFP.** Ensures that anyone with limited English proficiency (LEP) receives the language services necessary to allow for meaningful access to City services and information, free of charge, in a timely manner that preserves confidentiality, irrespective of their ability to read, write, or speak English. The deadline for this RFP is March 15.
 - **Active Transportation Plan RFP.** The selection review committee is currently reviewing the proposals.
 - **RPD Building RFP.** The project was advertised, and proposals are due on March 30th.
 - **Centre Park Revitalization Project RFP.** Proposals were received for design services for the Centre Park Revitalization Project. The review process will begin soon.
 - **Heritage Park Outfall Park Project RFP.** This project is to remove and replace an existing section of stormwater outfall pipe, including excavation, furnishing, and placement of drainage structures, furnishing, and placement of drainage pipe, backfill, furnishing, and installation of slope protection. The deadline for submission is March 17th.

FIRE:

- The Fire Department is experiencing supply chain delays with the following apparatus purchases:
 - Initially scheduled for delivery in November 2021, the Tower Ladder is now delayed until late April 2022.
 - Construction of 2 Engines awarded in October 2021 will only begin in July 2022.
- The 9th and Marion Fire Station project site work is progressing. Footers were poured on the south end of the construction site, and block work has begun in that section. Below is a current photo of progress at the worksite:



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION:

- Starting on January 1st, and as of March 4th, HRC has:
 - 94 total rent and utility assistance applications were received (An increase of 12 applications since last reported).
 - 93 applications for rental assistance
 - 84 applicants were facing eviction
 - 7 applicants were not actively facing eviction
 - 1 applicant resided outside of the City but within the County.
 - 1 application for utility assistance
- With the assistance of Community Development funding, the Human Relations Commission has assisted 11 families with ESG funding, 27 families with ESG Covid funding, and five families with CDBG Covid funding.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

- The Human Resource Department would like to welcome the following new employees to the City of Reading organization:
 - Stacie Nein began on March 1st as a Paramedic, Non-Firefighter
 - Cody Rissolli began on March 1st as Paramedic, Non-Firefighter
 - Elizabeth Steffens began on March 1st as a Paramedic, Non-fighter
 - Christopher Geltz began on March 1st as the City's Chief Building Official
 - Adriane Scott will begin on March 16th as a secretary for Public Works
- The City's Training Coordinator Ken Miller is attending job fairs to engage with job seekers and promote City vacancies. He participated in a job fair at the Penn State Berks campus on March 2nd and at RACC March 3rd.

LIBRARY:

- The Reading Public Library received positive media coverage on the impact of the \$2,525 First United Church of Christ Mission grant awarded by the Berks County Community Foundation. The grant was awarded to the library in 2021 to create and distribute 100 literacy care packages to seniors.
- The RPL hired a new Youth Service Coordinator for the Northeast branch library. They are still seeking a full-time Reference Paraprofessional and two part-time Library Assistants. Anyone interested can visit the Library's website at:
 - <https://www.readingpl.org/about-2/volunteer-job-opportunities/>

POLICE:

- The Reading Police Department held its civil service exam on Saturday, February 26th, at Alvernia University. Sixty candidates passed the written exam. The PT test is scheduled for March 12th at Alvernia University.
- The RPD's Lt. Lance Lillis continues to do excellent community outreach. Recently, Lt. Lillis donated 20 gun locks to the Village of Reading for distribution at community events, completed a Public Service Announcement relating to robbery incidents, and attended a job fair at the Penn State Berks campus.

Upcoming events included a Coffee with a Cop event planned for the coming weeks and additional community events.

PUBLIC WORKS:

- Public Works Solid Waste Manager met with the Opportunity House Recycling Facility Manager and staff on March 1st to discuss possible collaboration.
- Public Works staff continues to assist with prep and remodeling of offices areas in City Hall.

- Public Works crews collected trash and litter on Penn Street, from 4th Street to 6th Street. Over the course of 14 days, a total of 514 bags of trash were collected.
- Public Works staff are close to completing tree pruning efforts on North 9th St from Penn Street to Buttonwood Street. Currently, tree pruning is underway along Willow Street from South 5th Street to South 7th Street, with Spruce Street, from South 3rd Street to South 7th Street next on the list.
- Public Works would like to announce that Spring Street and River Road, between Weiser St. and the Schuylkill Avenue Bridge, is reopened to normal traffic operations. Please note that although additional long-term closures are not expected, the side Street along the Schuylkill Avenue Bridge at the Northwest Library branch is permanently closed off (no thru-traffic). Later this year, a new traffic signal will be installed at the West Windsor Street and Schuylkill Avenue intersection to replace the current “blinking light.”

In addition, Eberhart Street will become a one-way street, traveling south with a “right turn only” going onto West Windsor Street. Once implemented, no left-turns from Eberhart Street onto Schuylkill Avenue or right-turns onto Eberhart Street from West Windsor Street will be permitted. New traffic control signage will be installed to instruct the public accordingly.

These much-needed changes will increase the safety and accessibility of the intersection, and we are confident that the public will be happy with the improvements.